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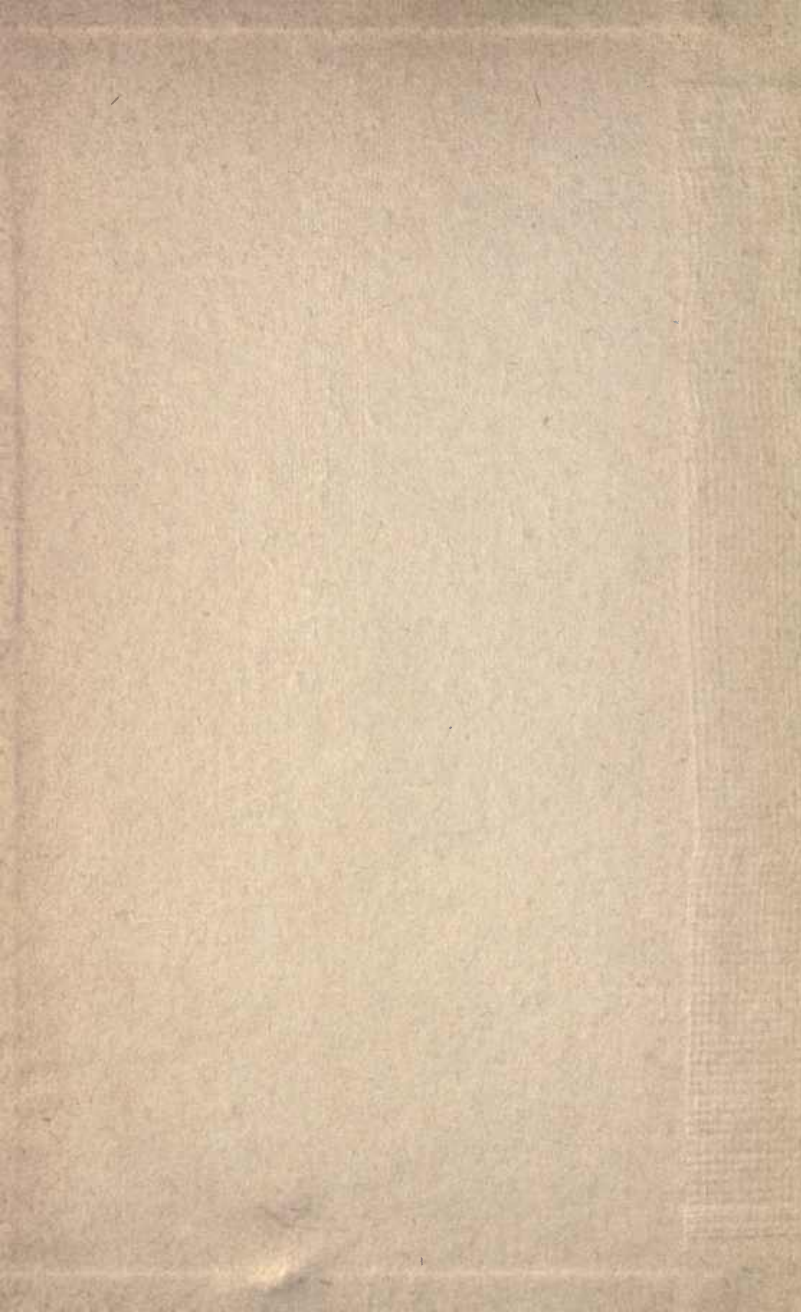
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Irene Owen Andrews

Feb. - 1923

HILLS OF DUBLIN

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By

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DUBLIN.

Throughout the summer dusk the dusty city
Lies weary unto death, but knows no rest :
The folding-star, like some bright eye of
pity,

Holds watch above her towers to the west ;
From all her wandering and fret set free,
Still constant to her first and single quest,
The strong, slow river seeks the stronger
sea,

And bears the ships away upon her breast

To where the yellow-headed Northmen came
In their gaunt hollow galleys, host on
host,

Until they saw the flaring cressets flame
Above the triple gateway ; and the coast

Runs down to scattered sandhills that men
name

Fingall; wherein long grassy levels boast
Wild pansy, and bright sea-pink paints the
same,

With campion tufts, that love the shingle
most.

And there Ben Edar rises, as a wall
Against the north, whence blows the
bitter wind

In early spring, to bring the flying squall
Of shattering hail, that strikes the city
blind

With shadow; and the drenching torrents
fall

Until the sudden sun breaks out behind
To sweeten every street; and over all
The wide-winged seagulls wander uncon-
fined.

And children, faring to far fields forlorn,
Forget her squalor for a single day

To break great branches of the blossoming
thorn;

Or strip, and in the cooling water play,
Or gather cowslips; till at dusk, footworn,
Returning home, each court and narrow
way

Is fresh with flowers from the meadows
borne—

But in the stifling slum they soon decay.

To-night no keen wind coming from the sea
Can medicine her great and growing
pain;

Nor any far-plucked flower, beloved of bee,
Upon her forehead hide the heavy stain—
Disgrace of a dishonoured century;

Nor aught refresh her—though desired
rain

May wash the choking dust from every
tree—

Till the king's son shall sit at home again.

The high hill wind, that blows across the
heather,

The wild hill wind, wherein the red
hawks hover,

Brings up the rack and racing western
weather

Across her walls; and carries down the
plover

With curlew, wailing in vast flocks to-
gether;

And woos her with his warm breath like
a lover;

And she has drunk out of his mighty methyr
For many moons: and yet he may not
move her.

And in the dawn the swelling tide returns
To brim to all her bridges, with a stir
Of ships; and still her silent hearth-place
burns

For that bright bridegroom, who shall
cherish her,

And fill up to the lid her idle querns

With yellow grain, and on her name
confer
High honour; when that house for which
she yearns
Shall raise a mighty roof-tree over her.

Where the clear quickening beat of wood-
quests' wings
Troubles the air, else steady in the heat;
Or where each teeming mead and hedge-row
flings
The heavy fragrance of white meadow-
sweet
And woodbine; where the slender white-
throat sings,
On those high windy heathlands, whence
the wheat
Shows slashed and streaked with poppy,
and where clings
The noisy whinchat; from whate'er
retreat

Far-sought for health and healing, still the
eye

Has glimpse of her, sun-smitten, far
below.

Her spires strike into the morning sky;

Her smoke rolls up into the afterglow;

And still we hear her inarticulate cry

That bids us come to her, and we must go
To where her lights burn low and fitfully;

We may not leave her since she loves us so.

Among the desolate corries of the north

The scattered dwellers hear her distant
call,

And cast aside the sickle, to come forth

In answer to her cry—and out of all

The brown bogs of the west, where the
wind's wrath

Is wreaked upon the waste: and each
footfall

Draws nigh to her, and she, who knows
their worth,

Closes her gates, to hold their manhood
thrall

To her high purpose, while her wingéd
dead,

Broken, upon the wheel of her desire,
Awake her echoes with tumultous tread.

Let us go down to fan her failing fire :
Let us go down, for have not these feet bled
Upon her stones, did not our own hands
tire

At her great work ; and shall we hear it said
That we forsook and ceased to feed the
pyre

Whence, phoenix-like, renewed in energy
She may arise. But when that day may
be

We know not ; when, fulfilled of prophecy,
And fresh from her espousal, we shall see
This city, compassed by security
Among the revel of the winds, rise free
Into the dawn and everlastingly
Lift up her citadel above the sea.

TRISTRAM AND ISEULT SET SAILS FOR CORNWALL.

Then left those twain tall Dublin's towers
behind

With all her battlements, and banneroles
Astrain upon the singing, salt sea-wind,

To which they shook the sails' fast-
swelling folds

And drove far southward with sea-sunder-
ing keel.

All day, above the carven stern, the queen
Looked to the north, or watched the grey
gulls wheel

Above the whitening wake, till where
had been

The coast, there came a waste of sea and
sky,

With one inviolate star; and eastward
grew

The moon, and smote the broad sea sud-
denly

To silver; when the wind no longer blew
But died, to leave a slow, half-slumbering
swell

Beneath the vessel, where she rose and fell.

OUT OF IRELAND INTO CORN- WALL.

By night the dog-star mounted in the south;
By day they saw far off the long low hulls
Of distant ships, by many a harbour mouth,
Cried over by a wind-spun rout of gulls.

Then came upon the sea an iron cold
To freeze the bitter spray upon the sail,
And strike to the dark hollows of the hold
With sudden squall of snow, and drift
of hail.

And Iseult's falcon perished in the frost
That held, until there crept a cold sea-
fret
About the galley, in which all was lost;
But with the dripping thaw the decks
were wet,
For now the wind went round, and woke
again
With clinging vapour of the warm soft
rain.

THE FIRST SIGHT OF CORNWALL.

And Iseult, tiring of the tapestries,
Went up above into the sun and wind
To watch the vessel wallowing in the seas,
And stood above the prow, and, from
behind,
The drowsy steersman gave a sudden shout,
As on the bitter blowing brine was borne
A roar of voices, and swelled faintly out
The echoing sweetness of a silver horn.

So, smitten with the change of sun and
showers,
She saw Tintagel, with the crowded quay
Ablaze with colour: all bestrown with
flowers
And fluttering pennons, went the wind-
ing way
Up to the wide-flung doorway, whence King
Mark
Bent his broad brows upon their labour-
ing barque.

THE THEFT OF THE HOUNDS OF FINN.

I.

There was high feasting in Tintagel's hall,
The doorways wide, through which the
swell and sound

Of the salt ocean came; and the low sun
Made a slow-moving flush along the wall.
But a trance fell on Merlin, and he ceased
From feasting, and the hosts of Arthur
ceased

From feasting; aye, and Arthur's royal self,
For fear the trance of Merlin be disturbed.

So sat they till the sun was under sea,
When Merlin spoke: "I saw tall, ruddy
men

With yellow hair, go hunting on a hill—

And there be none in Britain like to them :
Before them went a pair of windswift
hounds;

But there are none in Britain such as
those :

And in their midst moved quick a man
whose name

Is Finn, the son of Cumhal, son of Trénmor,
And Arthur is a lesser man than he."

But Arthur hid his anger with a smile,
And said : " Great Merlin, if this hunt be
not

Within the bounds of Britain, where is it ?"
And Merlin answered : " In the western
woods

Upon Ben Edar." Then King Arthur
cried :

" Oh, Merlin, wise and subtle, you who
know

The womb of every wind that blows, and all
The tides and ocean highways, bring us
there,

For we would see this hunt!" But Merlin
laughed

Within himself, for well he knew the king—
That in his heart he coveted the hounds.

"Let ships be ready for the sea before
To-morrow's dusk." He spoke, and rose
from feast.

Then Merlin all that night until the dawn
Cast spells and circles, to call up a wind
Out of the south; which came at his com-
mand

And all day blew about the battlements.
So when the sun had sunk into the sea,
And after it a star had set, they raised
The painted sails, with dragons all asprawl,
And took the wizard wind upon their
wings.

And steady drew Pendragon's argosy
To come, at sundown, to a broad waste bay
With one hill black against the afterglow—
Ben Edar—whence uproarious tumult came

Across the sea, and made the hosts afraid.
“ The laughter of the company of Finn
At feast,” said Merlin; and he bade the
 blast
Cease blowing, and with broad oar-blades
 they beat
The water, and they came beneath the
 cliffs—
And Merlin made the ships invisible.

Loud sound of hurrying hound and hunt-
 ing-horn
Awoke the hosts at dawn, as down the slopes
The fair-haired Fianna of Erin came
Like salmon fresh from sea, and in their
 midst
Was Finn, the son of Cumhal, son of Trén-
 mor,
Whose beauty made King Arthur catch his
 breath—
Who held upon a leash the long lithe hounds
That made the heart of Arthur covetous.
And these gave tongue, and the wild oxen
 rose,

And Finn let slip the hounds to follow up
The milk-white oxen, and Finn followed
them

With all the Fianna, while Ben Edar rang
With sound of hurrying hound and hunt-
ing-horn.

But when the sun was fallen in the west
The chase came seaward, when a snow-
white bull

Came thundering thro' the surf, with the
two hounds

In close pursuit, who took the sea, and swam
Among invisible vessels, where they cast
At Arthur's word, well-woven webs of cord
Upon the hounds, and took them : but to
Finn

It seemed that they were vanished into air.

Now Merlin saw the casting of the nets,
And cried to Arthur, that he quit his theft,
Nor take the hounds of Finn but in fair
fight;

But the king bade him cease, and answered him :

“Am I not Arthur? Am I not the king?
Is Merlin monarch? Summon thou a wind
To carry hosts and hounds to Cornwall!”

And Merlin, in his anger, went and stood
Above the stern, swaying, and he called
The ragged wind-rack up out of the west
With thunder, squall, and tempest; and
there came

A sudden darkness on the world, which
struck

And drove the ships of Britain out to sea.

II.

“ Summon the ship of Mánanaan Mac Lir,”
Said Finn, the son of Cumhal: “ for I see
The fellowship of Arthur bear the hounds
Far oversea, south-eastward, to the land
Of Britain, where they make fair fellow-
ship—

Yet not so fair as Finn’s.”

So they set forth
To run upon the swell, and soon they saw
Tintagel take the wind; and in the wind
Upon the roof-ridge, sat the sacred chough;
And in the gaunt grey chambers nothing
 stirred
Save wind, for Arthur hunted with the
 hounds.
And Finn went up and slept in Arthur's
 chair,
For he was heavy; but the rest went forth
To seek through every windy sand-hill
 waste,
Through every wood and waste, until they
 found
A mighty hunting booth, set up midway
Between the northern and the southern sea.

When they beheld the Fianna, the hounds
Cried out to come to them, but Arthur rose
With all his fellowship, and flashed forth
 sword,
And overset the feast, and fell in fight

Upon the Fianna, but failed, as few
 And fewer grew his followers before
 The followers of Finn, till none but he
 Swung a vain sword : when fair-haired
 Oscar, son

Of Ossian, who fled into fairyland,
 Sprang in fierce fury to the front, and
 cried :

“Nay, slay him not, but carry him to Finn!”

They broke and burnt the booth, and bore
 away

The hounds and Arthur, to the sea-swept
 heights

Upon whose windy summits, in the dawn,
 Mage Merlin, standing, laughed, and went
 within

To waken Finn from sleeping, crying out :

“ Fair Finn, the son of Cumhal, son of
 Trénmor,

Arise and judge!” when Finn, awakening,
 saw

The stolen hounds with Arthur in the hall.

But Finn arose, and yielded up his chair
With fair, grave courtesy, and made great
joy -

Among the hounds, and questioned of the
king

About his fellowship, where they might be.

When Arthur answered : “ They are cold
in death” ;

“ I grieve that it be so,” said gentle Finn,

“ The Fianna of Erin deal fair play

To all who come as friends, and open foes

Receive fair sword-play ; but who come by
stealth

Abide our anger. Arthur, had'st thou
wished,

We would have had thee with us in the
woods

From summer unto summer, at the hunt,

To fly the hawk into the wind, to swim,

To spear the salmon, and to feast at dusk.”

But Arthur sat in silence, so profound,

Was heard the sceart rise sudden in the sea

To beat the brine, and settle down again—
 When Finn cried out : “ We must fare far
 away

Into the west,” and he put forth his hand
 To say farewell, and Arthur laid his hand
 Within it, but he might not say farewell.
 So Finn and all the Fianna arose
 And passed down the stone stairway to the
 sea,

To run the grinding keel into the surf,
 And leap aboard, yet flung abroad no sail
 But swept along the sun-track to the west.

And Merlin climbed among the towers, and
 cried

Upon the topmost battlement : “ Farewell !
 The kestrel saw the chough within the cage,
 And came, and broke the wires, and struck,
 and strikes

Again to-morrow, and to-morrow : yet fare-
 well,

Fair Finn, the son of Cumhal, son of
 Trénmor,

And all the fair-haired Fianna of Erin—
 The fair-haired, fair-faced Fianna of
 Erin !”

IN THE FIFTEEN ACRES.

A sky-line quick with wind, and change of
cloud,

With light and darkness shifting on the
track

Where we two, pacing as the gods are
proud,

Among wild wraiths and wreaths of
wind-blown rack

Draw close together, and impetuous, urge
Unflagging horses to the utmost verge.

The wild white gulls wing seaward, over-
head—

Blown far by the bleak wind; but rather
we

Fare onward, facing to the sun's bright
head,

To bitterness, or aught but liberty

Averse alway : so, swift before the night,
Hasten our horses to the heart of light.

Since light, and life, and love within our
veins

Be mingled in an ecstasy of mirth,
With the loud skies in travail of the rains—
And the large energies of shaken earth
Beneath the tumult of these thund'rous feet
Awake—and all the pulse of things is
sweet.

For though it be not time of bursting bud,
Nor burgeon of the year, but his decease—
Yet youth sings second spring within the
blood,

And love dare hold a single day in lease
Of winter, and for one unstricken hour
Bid soul and body flame to mutual flower.

.

We have desired life, as life may be,
Made void of fear—of body or of soul—

Built upon strength, compact of energy,
Moulded by love to one harmonious whole
To bid, by virtue of sheer depth and
breadth,
Defiance of strong change, and stronger
death.

Yet all who met us heretofore have said :
“ There is none such on earth ; and who
dare say
If such life be in days beyond the dead ?
Lo, signed with our defeat, we ceaseless
pray
That all unquiet and desire may cease
For aught save patience, and abiding
peace ! ”

But we give chase upon the sun to capture
Courage for the world, and from his light
Rob colour, to renew life's fading rapture :
How may our weakness dare abide his
might ?

Within that vast heart, and those veins
 among
May not our souls grow steady and wax
 strong?

So farther, and yet faster, and more fleet
 Our flight, whose ecstasy our being fills,
While stronger, yet still subtle and most
 sweet,

The virginal breath of far inviolate hills
Imbues us—till, beyond mere humankind
We seem to move, incorporate with the
 wind.

Yet ever do your eyes return, to brood
 Upon that valley, where the city lies
Devoid of pity, filled with brotherhood
 Of bitterness; mistrustful of the skies
They seem, and now you whisper : “ Cease
 to haste—
Since, love, I fear this journey through the
 waste !

Though in the waste is aught of any worth
Begotten : all frail visions which evade
Pursuit, and all strong things therein have
birth;

Yet here all forms forever flock, to fade
Before the face of this fast-failing sun
Wherein each one is ended as begun.

And no delight is born but that shall die;
And none may follow aught unto the
close;

While, out of whence we came, there grows
a cry

To call us hence from this pursuit we
chose,

And bids us look, how, dispossessed of
light

The kingdom of the west is thrall to night.

Lo, down beneath us lie a hundred homes;
There burn a hundred hearths; beside
them beat

A hundred human hearts; and he who
 roams

Beyond them, shall not better their
 defeat.

.

Nay, gaze no more upon the sun's dead
 shrine—

Bend down your head—to give your mouth
 to mine!"

THE WINGED VICTORY OF SAMOTHRACE.

The slow blood quickens to the thought of
her

Upon the quivering stem, with winnowing
wings

Above the thrashing oar-blades, and the stir
Of beaten waters : while the dull brain
rings

To tumult, rising from a teeming ship,
And swelling into one reverberant cry
Of vigour, and exultant fellowship
Intoxicate : the cry of Victory.

To-day she stands among us mutilate,
And fainter wane her fires, hour by hour,
Yet was her pristine energy so great
That the mere sight of her has still the
power

To make the wild and the waste places sweet
For us, who know of nothing but defeat.

THE VENUS OF MILO.

Contemplative, with mild austerity

Upon her brow, contentment in her eyes,
She dwells upon her great posterity.

Her calm maternity brooks not the cries
Of broken motherhood; she can divine

No dynasty, that may dark power prove
Against her high imperishable line :

For she is Beauty, and her son is Love.

Immortal both : but both alike, dethroned,
Do ceaseless battle, striving to regain
That kingdom, wherein many men have
groaned

For lack of them; and many more, in pain
Seek out, before the last of light be done,
Another mother, with a stricken son.

“ PHYSICAL ENERGY.”

(By G. F. WATTS, R.A.)

But has he travelled through the silent
night

To gain the summit of far hills at dawn,
And see renewal of the risen light

Upon the fields of earth and ocean
drawn :

Or did he journey through triumphant day,
To come at dusk to some cool place of
rest,

And his high charger on some hill-crest stay
To watch the glory growing in the west ?

The savour and the strength of the salt sea :
The wide, waste, wind-filled spaces : all
subserve

His being : thus he fares, forever free,
Beyond the sky line : nor does he observe
Obedience to that dark fate, which gives
To man, the lord of life, the least of lives.

CUCHULAIN'S DEPARTURE FROM SKYE.

(FRAGMENT.)

Among the riven rocks and wildering heath,
Between the barren breasts of two lean hills

two lean hills

The gap was cloven, where Cuchulain came,
And ceased the clamour of his chariot
wheels

Upon the summit, where close-crowding
spears

Struck dark across the primrose of the
moon

Within the eastern valley, while the west
Showed how the sun sank shattered to the
sea.

He looked into the hollows of the hills
 Which hid the dun of Aoife towards the
 east,
 And then into the west, whose racing rack
 Climbed flushing in a wind that stung the
 blood
 To tingle in his cheek, and smelt the sea,
 And thought upon the roaring Red Branch
 host—
 And Aoife and her son were naught to him.

Cuchulain sped him seaward with the
 streams,
 And Emer walked before his straining eyes,
 As all night long he urged his chariot wheels
 Down to the verges of the wine-dark sea.

A DONEGAL BOY IN DUBLIN.

Oh, 'tis weary I am
Of the streets that are gray,
With no sight of the sun
Through the length of the day.

It is lonesome I am
For the sound of the surf,
It is longing I am
For the smell of the turf.

The wee yellow cowslips
They cry in the street,
In the fields around home
Are many and sweet,

And the little brown larks
On the wet window-sills—
They sing the same song
On the Donegal hills.

And the calling of gulls
In the wild air above
Is the same that they hear
In the place that I love.

With a hundred of faces
Not one that I know—
But the cold of the wind
In my face as I go!

HOW EARL SIGURD CHOSE HIM HIS GODS FOR THE HOSTING.

Sigurd, the son of Hlodver, stood upon
The doorstone of the stronghold, and he
saw

The wide sea whiten in the north-west wind
Until the brine was heavy in his beard.
Then left the threshold, and he went within
The feasting-hall, where high upon the wall
Hung shield, and wingéd helm, and bright
sword

Of Sigurd's hosting, and the floors were
strewn

With sea-grass, while the feasting board
was spread

With mead and many wild-fowl, and the
seats

With skin of seal, of otter, and of deer—
 Since on that night the host of Sigurd met
 At feast, and on the morrow in the dawn
 Set sail for that great hosting of Clontarf.

There Sigurd's mother sat her at her loom,
 Edna, the child of Cearbhall, and she wove
 A web upon her loom, and many months
 She wove it, nor might any know the web.
 But now she spoke to Sigurd, and she said :
 " Oh son, there was another of old time,
 Sigurd, the bane of Fafnir, who went safe
 Because of Grani, and because of Gram—
 His wizard horse and sword; so I have
 woven

A wizard banner, so thou shalt go safe
 In battle, and the rune of it be this :
 He before whom this banner may be borne
 Shall live, but whosoe'er may bear it dies."

Now by the aid of Odin and the Norns
 Wrought as a raven, with all wondrous
 dyes,

The banner was, but Sigurd put it by :

“ Oh mother, Olaf bade me come to Christ,
To quit the aid of Odin and the Norns,
While yet he lived, and now that he be dead
I would not break my oath.” But Edna
spoke :

“ When was the Christ the God of warring
hosts ?

Wilt thou refuse the work thy mother
wrought ?

If so, thou are not Sigurd, Edna's child,
The son of Hlodver, but some other one.”

And Sigurd would not vex her ancient heart
So took, and hung the banner by his chair—
Through the wide doorway blew the north-
west wind

To stir the banner, when it seemed the bive
Would beat and flutter with his wings for
flight.

The host was now at hand, who entered in
With mighty riot, and the doors made fast

Against the wind, and every hearthstone
stirred,

They sat them to the feast, and overhead
The rafters rang with uproar, while the
mead

Went round, and warm blood mounted in
their hearts.

But when they had drunk deeply, when the
hall

Was darkened in the dusk, then Sigurd
called

For torches, and he bade a skald to sing.

“Earl Sigurd,” said the skald, “why
sittest thou

Beneath the raven? Rather should it be
The Cross of Christ, for under His com-
mand

Shall Brian offer battle, against Whom
Odin and Thor, with all Valhalla's host,
May not avail; but be not angry thou
At what I sing: it is but Christ who
speaks.”

So he took up his tympan, and he sang :

Son of Brian be the bane

Of Sigurd :

Bear twin blades to break the brain

Of Sigurd :

For his banner shall not thrive,

Blazoned with the baleful bive

Of baneful Sigurd.

Black and bitter be the weird

Of Sigurd :

Blood upon the yellow beard

Of Sigurd :

Scattered in the sea-swept stones,

Sea and sun shall bleach the bones

Of stone-cold Sigurd.

Upon the son of Hlodver came a fell

And violent anger, who arose and drew

The sword, and bade the host rise up, and
draw

The sword to swear with him, and thus
they swore :

“ Great Odin, Thor, and all Valhalla’s host

Be with us in the battle, wheresoe'er
This bive may beat his wings, for from this
day

The host of Sigurd follow after Christ
No longer!" But a wailing blast of wind
Burst open the broad doors, and beat upon
The swearing host, and blew the torches out
And shook the banner.

And the doors made fast,
There fell on all the heaviness of mead—
So Sigurd and the host of Sigurd slept.

THE HILL-FIRE UPON SLANE.

Strong sounds in the valley the noise,
With the whirr of his wheels;
Yet we see, through our art and our
 spells,
To a day, when he kneels
At the feet of a druid, new come
From the barbarous east
With strange words of new law in his
 mouth,
And fresh gods in his breast.

We have stood where the ravens have cried,
From the crest of his throne,
We have seen, that where rested his feet
The tall hemlock has grown.

While the cairns are down to the dust,
The great dolmens o'erturned,
And the cromlechs have fallen away
Since that fire burned.

And the eagle has yielded the strength
Of his eyrie above,
In the vaporous deeps of the mountains
Up to the dove;
And the salmon, once quick in the torrent
Has sickened away,
While the wolf that went free through the
forest
Is worn and grey.

But our days are outworn and over,
Our power undone.
The clear sap in the quicken may cease
To rise towards the sun.
When the weak and the mild are abroad
On the face of the ways,
The strong shall go cover their heads
And lead desolate days.

SONNET.

But I have seen, strong steady souls aspire
To thy content, as eagles to the sun,
While my wings beat forever in the mire,
And each day's gain to-morrow sees
undone.

But these fare on, with easy-seeming flight
Unto thy dwelling, where they enter in
And quickly do attain to their delight,
To leave me lonely in the slough of sin.

Hear thou my great, exceeding bitter cry—
“ When shall I quit the toils about my
feet—

Must I forever labour till I die?

So little have these known of the heat
And languor of the day, yet is their place
Made ready, while from me thou turn'st
thy face.”

THE STARLINGS.

When these, who whilom knew
Spring's fluting fellowship,
Now haggard branches drip
And steady hours be few,
In jocund companies
Traverse decaying skies—

To one, who midmost spring,
Alone did move alone,
Ancestral autumn's moan
No bond of life may bring :
For him their cries proclaim
A pain too deep for name.

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